Prayer consists of two kinds of communication to God: (1) Thanksgiving and praise, (2) Requests and supplications (Php 4:6; 1 Th 5:16-18).

Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, teaches us about the second of these. Asking of God was the emphasis in the Lord’s example prayer in Matthew 6. Now, in chapter 7, Jesus reasons with us as to why we should ask of God (Mt 7:7-11).

Jesus shows us that we are dealing with a God different to the gods of human imagination. They are usually fickle and often cruel. The true Father in heaven is anxious to give good things generously, to all his children who ask of him in the proper spirit (2 Co 9:8; Jas 4:3).

The gifts that God gives in answer to our requests are never disappointing gifts. Jesus pictures a son who asks for bread, and his father picks up a stone. A stone might have a similar shape and appearance to a small loaf, but it would be no use to a hungry boy. Or maybe the son asks for a fish, and his father catches an eel or a sea snake. A Jewish boy could not eat such a "fish", because it would be unclean food to him. God is not a father like that. When we ask of God, we receive good gifts.

Paul put this principle in very strong words: God is "able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" and we can be "filled up to all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:14-21).

Matthew chapter 7, part of Jesus's sermon on the mountainside, could well be entitled “The Sensible Life”.

If you examine the chapter carefully, you will observe that it teaches us to think and act in ways that our modern world generally does not.

Yet these teachings are not peculiar or silly. They are sensible, and if truly practised would bring much healing and peace to our sick and troubled world.

In this chapter, Jesus teaches through a number of word pictures. In this lesson we identify them, and think about them.

One of the lessons is about God giving to those who ask just as any decent father gives good things to his children when they need something and ask for it. We especially look at that teaching in this lesson.